



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Washington, DC 20585



FEB 01 2005

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In your August 7, 2003, letter closing Recommendation 97-2, *Criticality Safety*, you established an annual reporting requirement. Enclosed is the report for Calendar Year 2004.

Overall, actions taken in response to Recommendation 97-2 have substantially improved the Department's criticality safety infrastructure and operational programs. Stable funding has been demonstrated again this year and the Nuclear Criticality Safety Program (NCSP) organization continues to function effectively to maintain important capabilities while addressing the most pressing operational criticality safety needs. A total of seven critical experiments and seven training classes were conducted at the Los Alamos Critical Experiments Facility. The NCSP continues to be closely involved in the effort to accelerate relocation of the facility's mission to the Nevada Test Site while minimizing impacts to the program. Neutron cross-section measurements were performed at the Oak Ridge Electron Linear Accelerator and more measurements are planned for 2005. An experienced Federal criticality safety person was added at the National Nuclear Security Administration Service Center to provide additional support to Los Alamos, Sandia and Pantex and additional staffing needs identified at other sites are being filled. Members of the Criticality Safety Support Group made visits to several sites to conduct assessments and design reviews, and to follow up on corrective actions identified in earlier reviews. Through implementation of the NCSP, a viable process for assessing needs, maintaining infrastructure, providing technical assistance and enhancing operational criticality safety has been institutionalized.

If you have any questions, please contact me directly or have your staff contact Mike Thompson at 301-903-5648.

Sincerely,

David H. Crandall
Assistant Deputy Administrator
for Research, Development, and Simulation
Defense Programs

Enclosure



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cc (w/enc):

M. Whitaker, DR-1

E. Beckner, NA-10

L. Brooks, NA-1

**1) Status of DOE Nuclear Criticality Safety
Program for CY 2004**

**2) DOE Nuclear Criticality Safety Program
Five-Year Plan**